

LESSON 3: TOBACCO — USE AND EFFECT



bronchitis
carbon monoxide
dependency
emphysema
gateway
hypertension
nicotine
second-hand smoke
stimulant
tar



INTRODUCTION

Many people hold the view that experimentation with or use of tobacco is considered normal or acceptable behavior. However, the use of tobacco often progresses to further drug abuses. Accordingly, some experts attach the term “**gateway**” to this substance. Use of drugs such as cocaine and heroin is unusual in those who have not previously used tobacco.

Tobacco’s hazards include cancer and other diseases and can also have ill effects on others. As awareness of these ill effects reaches new heights, more and more Americans are joining forces to fight tobacco abuse everyday.

TOBACCO

USE

In addition to smoking cigarettes, pipes, or cigars, people who use tobacco products can also do so orally in the forms of chewing tobacco (by placing a wad between the cheek and teeth and sucking on it) and snuff (by placing a pinch between the lower lip and teeth).

EFFECTS

Three major components make up tobacco, each having their own ill effects. One such component, **tar**, causes a variety of cancers and contributes to **emphysema** and other respiratory problems. For this reason, people often choose to smoke low-tar cigarettes, but even low-tar cigarettes can be unsafe because smokers often smoke more while using these brands. **Carbon monoxide**, also found in tobacco, restricts the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood, and can often cause insufficient heart operation. **Nicotine**, the substance in tobacco believed to cause **dependency**, is absorbed into the bloodstream, reaching the heart and brain within a few seconds of the onset of smoking.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nicotine in its pure state is a toxic poison and is used in insecticides.

It only takes one cigarette to:

- Speed up your heartbeat
- Increase your blood pressure

- Upset the flow of air in your lungs
- Cause a drop in the skin temperature of your fingers and toes

DID YOU KNOW?

Infections, especially pneumonia and acute bronchitis, are twice as common in young children whose parents smoke than children with non-smoking parents.

Some of the diseases associated with long-term tobacco smoking include chronic **bronchitis**, emphysema, coronary heart disease, and lung cancer. Lung cancer is the leading cause of death among women today. Cigarette smoking is a major independent risk factor for heart attacks (sometimes fatal) in both men and women. Pipe and cigar smokers are more prone to dying from cancer of the mouth and throat than non-smokers. Smoking also reduces the effectiveness of prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Although chewing tobacco and snuff are not smoked, they increase the risk of disease and damage to the delicate lining of the mouth and throat. As a result, individuals who use these products are more likely than non-users to develop mouth cancer, throat cancer, and gum disease. Chewing tobacco and snuff can also contribute to heart disease and strokes. The harmful effects of one can of snuff are equal to that of about sixty cigarettes.

Despite the labels required by federal law warning individuals about the hazardous effects of using tobacco products, use continues.

Recent research has indicated that non-smokers who breathe in **second-hand**

smoke (smoke that escapes from the burning end of a cigarette as well as the smoke exhaled by the smoker), can have an increased risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory disorders. Inhaling second-hand smoke makes the heart beat faster, the blood pressure go up, and the level of carbon monoxide in the blood increase. Smoke from an idling cigarette contains even more tar and nicotine than an inhaled one, in addition to more cadmium, a substance which has been related to **hypertension**, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema.

As the public becomes more aware of the dangers of inhaling second-hand smoke, the legislation protecting the rights of non-smokers continues to increase. Smoking is increasingly being banned in both public and private places.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each year more than 350,000 Americans die from smoking-related diseases.

PREVENTION

Because many young people give peer pressure as a reason for smoking, there is much that students can do to aid in smoking prevention. They can become involved in local organizations in an effort to extinguish peer pressures common to young adults.

- ⇒ The American Lung Association and its affiliates have developed a peer counseling program that can be implemented at high schools to promote the hazards of smoking.
- ⇒ *Students-Teach-Students* is a program that trains interested high school students to present smoking education programs and

act as role models to fifth graders, helping them to overcome peer pressure to smoke.

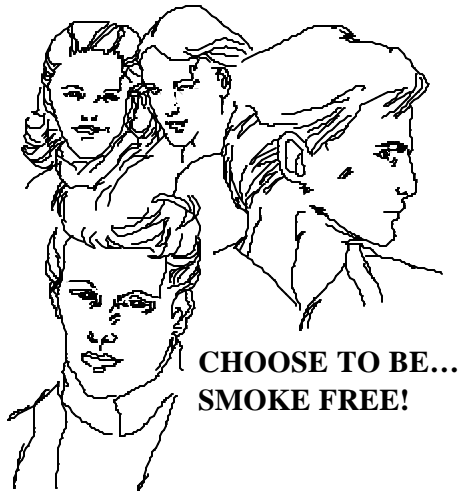


If you know someone who is seeking help in an effort to quit smoking, you may call a local chapter of the American Cancer Society or the American Cancer Society itself at 1-800-ACS-2345. Narcotics Anonymous, an organization similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, can provide support for those who desire treatment. Local chapters of the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association can also provide up-to-date information and resources.

WAYS TO SAY “NO”

Today’s young adults experience a great deal of peer pressure to experiment with or use alcohol and tobacco. One way to deal with this peer pressure is to be prepared to offer quick responses when such situations occur. The following are some quick-response ideas that you can use to plan ahead.

1. I’m not into body pollution.
2. I’m kind of depressed, so I don’t think I should try it today.
3. Not today, or, not now.
4. Nope, I don’t want the hassle.
5. I can’t — my mom can smell it on me when I get home.
6. No thank you.
7. When I need it, I’ll let you know.
8. I get grounded if I look sideways at my kid sister. I’d hate to think what would happen if my dad caught me smoking.
9. No thanks; I’ll wait until it’s legal.
10. No thanks. My grades are bad enough.
11. I’m into vitamins.
12. Not for me, thanks. I’m not into chemicals.
13. No thanks. I’m allergic.
14. No. I need all the brains I’ve got.
15. I don’t want to die young.
16. I’m into health.
17. I have a big test tomorrow, and I’d like to remember what I study tonight.
18. Some other time.
19. If the coach finds out, I’ll have to run laps.
20. No thanks. I just read a new study on its harmful effects.



CONCLUSION

While the damaging effects of tobacco use remain obvious, it has also become clear that even non-users of this substance can experience problems. More and more people are being affected every day. Because any use by young people is considered harmful and can have a dramatic effect on life and preparation for the future, challenge yourself and others to pledge not to use this dangerous substance.